We Need More Witchcraft in Business

A New York Times International editorial piece on Witchcraft and the US Presidential election was not where I expected to find inspiration on how to explain MySupportBroker to people – but I did. Apparently, Hillary Clinton's extreme critics during the election regularly referred to her as a witch, and a scroll through Twitter hashtag #WitchHillary revealed some people actually believed Mrs Clinton was practicing witchcraft. The Times quotes from an essay by journalist Jessa Crisp about Hillary Clinton and Victoria Woodhull, Victoria was the first woman to run for President and a practicing spiritualist. In the essay, Jessa argues that we could all do with more witchcraft in our politics and not less. She says witches have "faith in the balance between humans and the natural world, in the power of sexuality, in human equality and dignity, and in community over hierarchical power or authority" – a perfect elucidation of the cultural drivers of MySupportBroker. In my family, I am known for my witch-like qualities of sensing illness, herbal cures and feeling spirits so it came as no surprise to them when I told them about my understanding – in fact they questioned me as to how I had not seen that before! I must say I agree with Jessa about the need for more witchcraft and I would extend that out from politics into the business world, which is dominated by the pursuit of shareholder value and individual pursuit of wealth and status rather than desire to make the world a better place for us all.

But back to the MSB culture. We are driven by our form of in-house witchcraft which we call our Peer Principles of human to human interactions, mutuality, collaboration, helpfulness, equalising of power, self-help, choice, speaking up for yourself and others. To be part of MySupportBroker you need to have personal lived experience of disability or a physical or mental health condition. This is not unusual in our sector but what is different about the MSB peer definition is that it is much wider than conventionally applied. We do not see Peers only as people who share the same disability or conditions and who publicly identify as such, but rather as people with their own lived experience gained through a range of life experiences, including loving and supporting someone who has a health condition. As a peer, you are naturally sensitised to the human experience we deal with every day, having a ready empathy which makes it easier to engage with our Peer Principles. So now, when some conventional business owner or a 'professional' looks at me with pity for what they perceive as my naïve commitment to a peer-to-peer social business I say "oh no, it is not naivety, it's witchcraft" – this makes for a far more interesting conversation!